

Heritage Note

Land west of Ninfield Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex.

On behalf of Catesby

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group have been commissioned to appraise heritage matters relating to Land West of Ninfield Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, specifically to support and inform the vision document and the integration of assets and their settings into the evolving masterplan for residential development.
- 1.2. The site, known as High House Farm, comprises several plots of agricultural land near to Lunsford's Cross, to the north-west of Bexhill-on-Sea, together with a 1960s house and a complex of 'At-Cost' prefabricated farm buildings. The site is accessed by a metalled track from Ninfield Road to the east, which is also a Public Right of Way.
- 1.3. Adjacent to the site and its access is the Grade II Listed *The High House* (Plate 1, blue arrow).

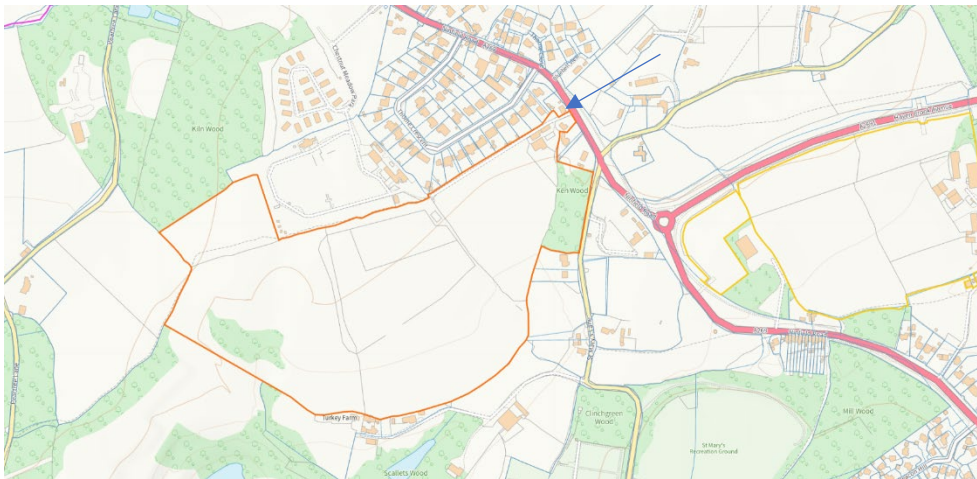


Plate 1: Site Location Plan.

- 1.4. This Heritage Note has been informed by a site visit and reference to historic maps and aerial photographs.

2. Built Heritage

- 2.1. Following the site visit, only the Grade II Listed *The High House* was considered to have the potential to be sensitive to the development proposals and thus has been taken forward for further assessment.

The High House

- 2.2. The High House was added to the National List at Grade II on 10th May 1949 (NHLE 1044248). The List Entry describes the building as follows:

***“Late C18 to early C19. 3 storeys. 3 windows. Grey headers with red brick dressings. Slate roof. Windows with slightly cambered head linings and glazing bars intact.*”**

Doorway with Doric pilasters, projecting cornice and door with 6 moulded and fielded panels, the top 2 panels now glazed.”

- 2.3. The house faces north-east onto Ninfield Road, with the principal façade being of three bays and three storeys, with a central doorway flanked by pilasters and with a projecting cornice. The first two floors have six-over-six sash windows. In contrast to the red brick of the other elevations, the primary façade is of grey brick with red brick dressings. The roof is of slate.
- 2.4. In addition to the description above, a further, possibly early-20th-century, extension is present at the southern side of the building.
- 2.5. The Listed Building is separated from Ninfield Road by only a small garden bounded by a low brick wall and gate. The house has a driveway to the north, leading into the garden. A secondary access to the courtyard is present from the trackway to the south.



Plate 2 Looking south-west to High House

Historic Development

- 2.6. The Listed Building is illustrated in the 1943 Tithe Apportionment for Bexhill (Plate 3). The dwelling lay in a plot which extended further to the north than today (approximately up to the line of Thorne Crescent) and was under the ownership and occupancy of John Mitchell. It is described as *Mount Pleasant* cottage and garden.
- 2.7. There does not appear to have been any other associated landholdings under the same ownership and occupancy in the wider area, but some parcels were under the same

ownership, including the cottage to the north (1798) and other buildings and small plots some distance away (beyond the site).

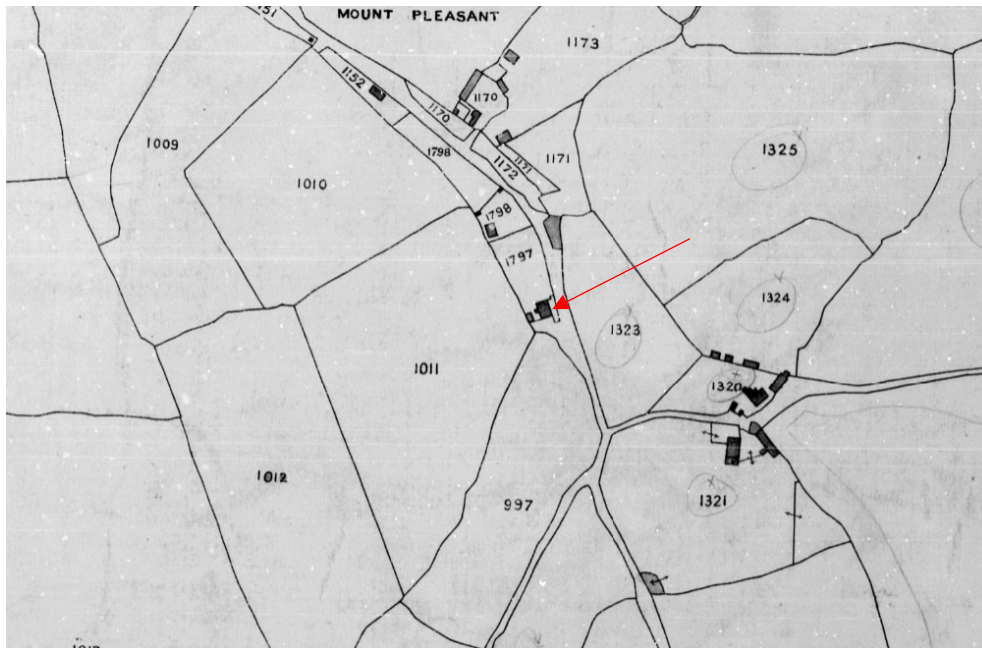


Plate 3 Extract from the Bexhill Tithe Map of 1843

- 2.8. The house appeared to front directly onto the road at the time of the Tithe Map, with the highway to the south splaying to include a large area to the south of the building.
- 2.9. The 1874 Ordnance Survey shows the footprints of the dwelling and wider plot are generally similar to as shown in the Tithe Map, although, although the front garden appears deeper (Plate 4). Two coniferous trees are shown to the south of the house. A trackway/path is depicted running west, to the south of the house, which may be the origin of the road splay south of the building.

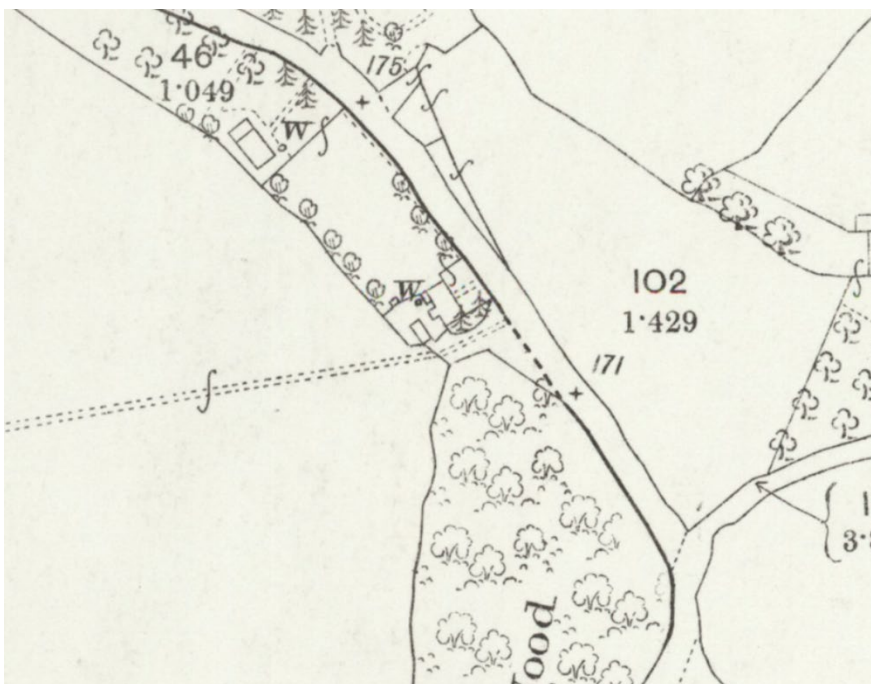


Plate 4 Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1874

2.10. Mapping of 1930 (Plate 5) shows a complex of structures south of the Listed building, which may be earlier farm buildings. Little change is depicted on the mapping of 1947 (Plate 6).

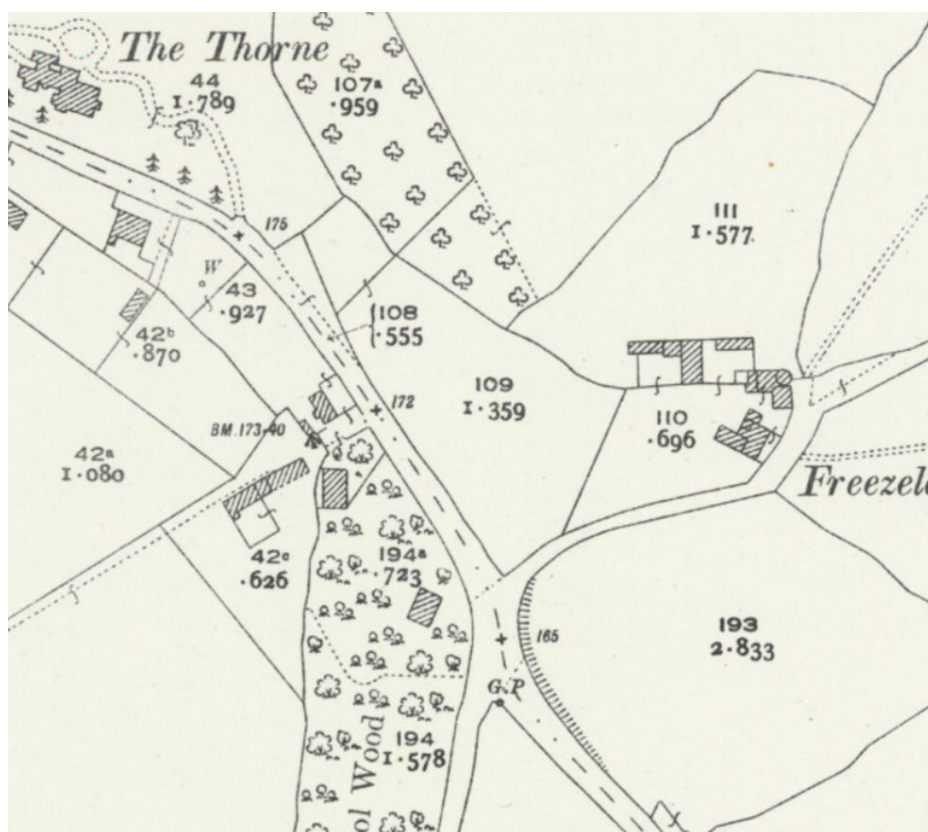


Plate 5: 1930 Ordnance Survey.

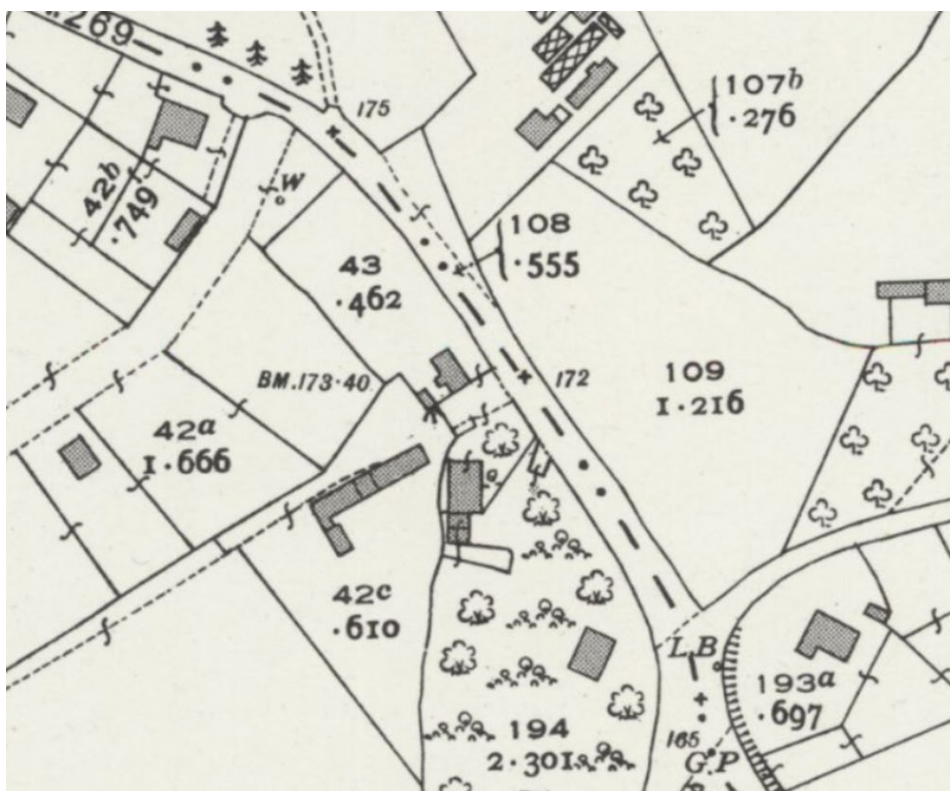


Plate 6: 1947 Ordnance Survey.

- 2.11. Since the middle of the 20th century, all the earlier farm buildings appear to have been replaced by modern concrete framed structures (Plates 7 and 8) and the residence within the site fronting onto Ninfield Road (Plate 9). This may have been the replacement farmhouse. This is of no historic interest.



Plate 7 Looking north-east to the modern barns



Plate 8 Looking south to the modern barns



Plate 9 Looking south to the residence fronting Ninfield Road to the south of the Listed building



Plate 10 Looking south-west to High House Farm

- 2.12. With regards to associations, the labelling of the farm buildings as High House Farm on mapping suggests a former link between the Listed building and the farm buildings, and possibly the land within the site. However, this would be a relatively modern association, as no such link was documented in the mid 19th century, and the extant buildings post-date the mid 20th-century. These buildings are not considered to be curtilage Listed.
- 2.13. The land of the site has some intervisibility with the rear of the Listed building, but this is largely blocked by the surrounding modern structures (Plates 11 and 12).



Plate 11: View towards Listed Building from the site, currently obstructed by farm buildings and vegetation.



Plate 12 Looking north towards the Listed building from the barn complex

- 2.14. Dynamic views moving westwards along the public footpath take in the Listed building then the fields of the site.

Statement of Significance

- 2.15. The Grade II Listing of the building highlights it is a heritage asset of the less than the highest significance as defined by the *NPPF*.¹
- 2.16. The heritage significance of *The High House* is principally embodied in its physical fabric which derives historic and architectural interest as a late-18th century vernacular style building.
- 2.17. The setting of the asset also contributes to the significance of the asset, although the significance derived from the setting is less than that derived from its historic fabric. The principal elements of the physical surrounds and experience of the asset (its "setting") which are considered to contribute to its heritage significance comprise:
- The wider grounds of the residence, including the side and rear courtyard and front garden; and
 - Ninfield Road which the building faces onto.
- 2.18. The land of the site including the farm buildings makes a contribution to the significance of High House through historic illustrative value in light of the probable recent functional

¹ DLUHC, *NPPF*, para. 206.

association, and its visibility in dynamic views along the footpath. However, this is tempered by the unattractive state of the barns, one of which is ruinous.

2.19. The barns, which are of no intrinsic architectural interest, would be demolished, resolving their derelict appearance in the vicinity of the Listed building. The modest historic illustrative value that they hold could be appropriately perpetuated through the provision of a building of agricultural architectural character, such as a shelter, expressing the local vernacular of red brick and clay tile roof.

2.20. As the demolition of the barns has the potential to open up glimpsed views between the wider site, the character of which will change to residential, and the rear of the Listed building, an appropriate set back of development will be provided, as well as planting to soften the north-eastern edge of development (Plate 13).

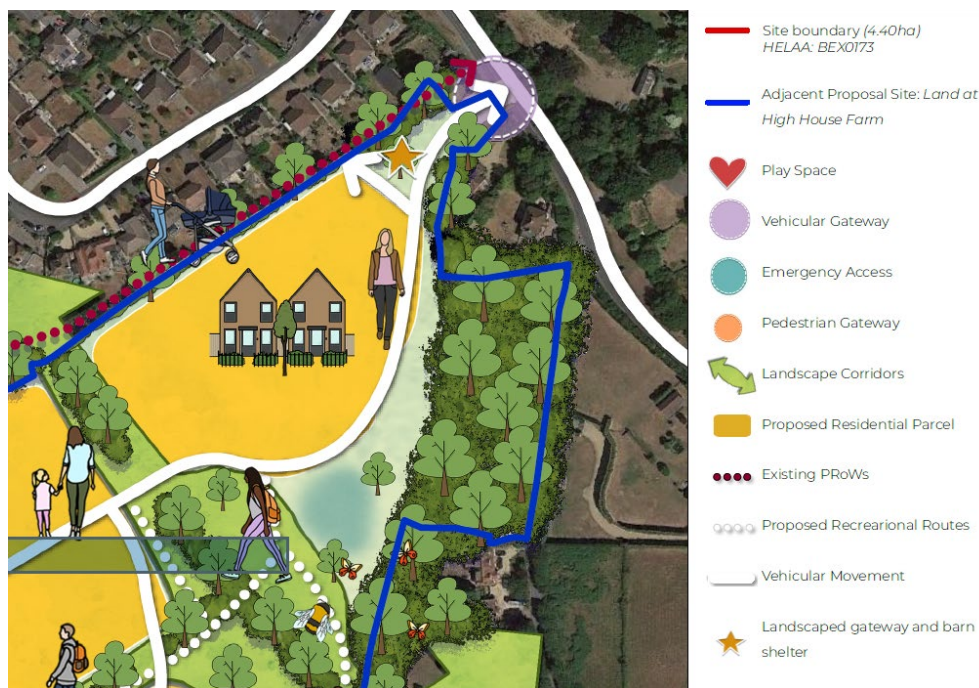


Plate 13 Extract from the Vision Masterplan

2.21. The demolition of the 1960s house fronting Ninfield Road would not cause any heritage harm.

2.22. Other associated works comprise the realignment of the road (Plate 14), which would take it further away from the Listed building, the creation of a new access to the south of the Listed building, and the widening of the footway to the east. As a footway is present already on the eastern side of the road, this is not considered to be harmful change within the setting of the Listed building.

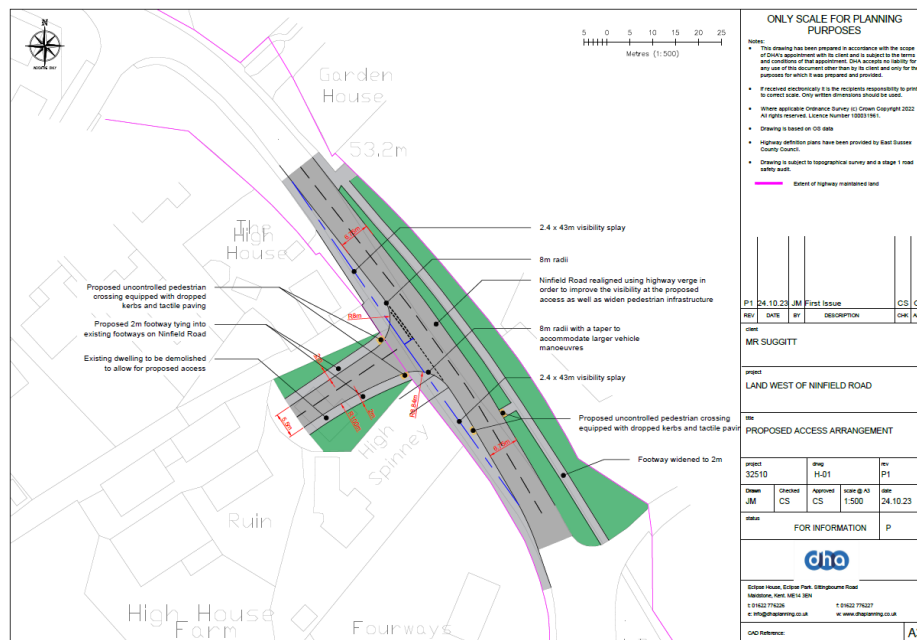


Plate 14 Anticipated access arrangements

- 2.23. The construction of the access will result in change to the area immediately to the south of the Listed building, but it should be noted that this area appears to have housed a wider junction arrangement historically (see plates 3 and 4, above). The Listed building clearly has a setting adjacent to a busy road.
- 2.24. In conclusion, if development were established within the site in line with the emerging masterplan, it would cause only less than substantial harm at the lower end of the spectrum. This would be through the loss of the historic illustrative value of the farm buildings, the change of character of the wider site and the establishment of the larger access. The change would be partially mitigated through an appropriate set back of development, planting on the north-eastern edge of development, and the establishment of a building of agricultural character. Built heritage is not considered to be a major constraint to the deliverability of the site for residential development.

3. Archaeology

- 3.1. A Roman ditch and other, undated features were recorded during evaluation works north of the site at Chestnut Meadow Caravan and Campsite. As such, there may be potential for associated remains within the site, although there is no current evidence to suggest that remains of a significance that would represent a constraint to development are present. The archaeological potential would be further investigated through such works as desk-based assessment and geophysical survey, to inform the planning application and allow an appropriate mitigation strategy to be formulated.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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